

Hazrat Maulana Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani Sahab (May Allah Ta'ala protect and preserve him),
Vice President Darul Uloom Karachi

Memories

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

أحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على رسوله الكريم وعلى آله وأصحابه أجمعين وعلى كل من تبعهم بإحسان إلى يوم الدين

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

All praise is for Allah who is the Lord of the worlds, and Prayers and Salutations on His Noble Messenger and on all of his family and companions, and on all those who followed them in righteousness till the Day of Judgment

Introduction

Many of my friends and well-wishers, after reading my travelogues, asked me to write my autobiography. But I always considered this request as stemming from their love, and never gave a serious thought to it. I used to think that biographies are only written of eminent personalities in whose lives there are lessons for others. What benefit could anyone get by reading the biography of someone like me who, if he were to look at his past life, would get nothing except regret and shame at his deeds?

Three years ago when my extremely respectable senior and Head Mufti of Darul Uloom Dabhel, Hazrat Maulana Mufti Ahmad Khanpuri Sahab (whose services for Islam are spread all over India, rather across different regions of the world) made the same request in the sacred *Haram*, I presented the same excuse at that time. However, after returning to Dabhel Hazrat Mufti Sahab (May his shade be extended) wrote a detailed letter in which he repeated the same request with great seriousness and emphasis, not only on his behalf but also on behalf of many other people of knowledge. This letter is reproduced below:

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

27 June 2011,

Honourable and respected Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Taqi Usmani Sahab (May his blessings continue to be upon us)!

Assalamualaikum Wa-Rahmatullahi Wa Barakaatuhu,

I ask Allah Ta'ala that Hazrat is with *'aafiyah* (peace and health) and safety. This lowly one has been fond of Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi's (May his grave be filled with light) and Hazrat's writings since a very

long time. The only reason for this is that these writings are completely in accordance with the temperament and attitude of *ulama-e-rabbaniyyin* (God-fearing scholars), and are a representation of the well-balanced understanding and pure ideas of our scholars. Especially what to say about the latest era of Hazrat's writings? Those with a religious outlook read them with great fervour and appetite; multiple editions are immediately sold out. When writings are receiving such acclaim, how beloved would the writer be himself? There is no need to elaborate on this; last year this same month of July Hazrat visited India, in which Hazrat himself witnessed the extreme love the people of this country have for Hazrat.

After this short introduction, I would like to humbly submit a request which is not only from this lowly one; rather it is the heartfelt yearning of a large group of Muslims. If this request is fulfilled it will quench a great thirst, a large group of people of knowledge will make heartfelt *dua* for Hazrat, and they will get their hands on a beacon of light. And people of knowledge will use this guiding lamp to solve the baffling complexities of their lives.

The request is that Hazrat should write his autobiography. To present examples of our elders writing their autobiographies to Hazrat is like showing a lamp to the sun. As such, I don't find the courage to write the names of their autobiographies. However one thing that occurred to the deficient mind of this lowly one is that autobiographies of people who are alive are more effective at motivating the present generation to follow their footsteps. It is while the luminaries are alive that, after truly recognizing their excellence and mastery (when it becomes accessible to the public in written form), benefit can be derived from them directly and on time, and the illuminated ways they have paved for us can be treaded. As a result, the path to progress in *Deen* (religious affairs) and *Dunya* (worldly affairs) can be traversed more easily and faster. Because if we read about the lives of those who have passed away, the truth is that the books elucidating their life stories and character traits are mere "theoretical representations", not a living, breathing model to be followed. Thus, for readers of their life stories and qualities (especially those who did not get to witness them, and their lives and times), a big question for them is: "Who will teach us how to practically implement these kind of lives and traits?" On the other hand, both "theoretical representation" and "practical model" are to be found in the lives of those who are alive.

Sending a "*Nur-un Azeem*" (Great Light) together with "*Kitab-um Mubeen*" (Clear Book) is the law made by the Lord of the Worlds (Glorious is His Majesty) Himself, and Allah (Glorious is His Majesty) has Himself shown this way to His creation and made them follow it. Furthermore, His slaves have accepted this as something natural and have followed it. I hope Hazrat would, in honour of this law of nature, consider this lowly one's request.

This lowly one's request is not about the autobiography of some common man, rather it is concerning such a great personality whose scholarly and religious services and literary masterpieces stand out on the world stage, and the entire Muslim world is heavily indebted to him. This is a personality who has single-handedly accomplished what normally requires an entire organization, a feat whose parable cannot be found in these times.

It may be that some hypercritical individuals (whom Hazrat had to face in the near past) label this autobiography as showing off and an unnecessary publicity of one's accomplishments, and they may smell self-aggrandizement and exaggeration in this. But it would not be appropriate to pay heed to the few criticizers, who have existed in all times and nobody has escaped their criticism, and deprive those who prize and cherish, whose number is beyond counting, of this treasure, and who are ever-ready to use such an autobiography as their fountainhead of wisdom. From students of religious knowledge and *Madrasas* to members of governmental Assemblies and courts, and for each human being from within Pakistan and abroad, it would contain a great treasure of lessons, wisdoms and reminders.

What denunciation and slandering did Hazrat Thanvi's contemporaries perpetrate when he delved into great details in "*Ashrafus Sawanih*"; and Hazrat Madni when he penned his memoirs in "*Naqsh-e-Hayat*"; and Hazrat Shaykhul Hadith when he wrote his autobiography! But all these elders deserve thanks from us juniors and the coming generations for not punishing us for the faultfinding of their critics and enviers. And despite being the embodiment of humility and self-annihilation, they did not deprive those who cherished to know their stories of life, and their scholarly and spiritual accomplishments.

This lowly one hopes that, acting on the footsteps of his elders, Hazrat would also not deprive us.

This lowly one has dared to indiscriminately pen his longstanding desire straight to the point. The reason for this is Hazrat's favours and graces itself. Whenever this lowly one was blessed with meeting Hazrat, he noticed that Hazrat's quality of appreciating even minute and worthless things is increasing day by day. It is possible that I may not have been able to maintain Hazrat's due respect in this letter. If Hazrat feels so, I humbly plead Hazrat for forgiveness. And I make dua from the depths of my heart that Allah Ta'ala keep Hazrat alive and safe with '*aafiyah* (peace and health) for services to the Muslim world for a very long time. From me and the entire world, Ameen!

Dictated by: Lowly Ahmad (May he be pardoned) Khanpuri

Servant of Darul Ifta, Jamiya Islamiya Ta'leem-ud Deen, Dabhel, Gujarat, India

An additional piece of writing came together with this letter. It described a dream seen by a pious teacher at Jamiya Dabhel and contained glad tidings for this lowly one. I'm reproducing it here merely to attain blessings. Regarding this I am fully cognizant of the following words of Hazrat Imam Muhammad Bin Sirin (May Allah's mercy be upon him), which I read in one of my respected father's (May Allah's mercy be upon him) writings. Hazrat Imam Muhammad Bin Sirin is famous as an *Imam* of interpretation of dreams. He said: "الرؤيا تسر ولا تغر". Meaning that there is no problem in being happy at seeing a good dream but one should not be deceived by it, because dreams are not the criterion to judge a person's acceptance in the Court of Allah. Rather it is his actions while he is awake which is the real criterion. However, it is alright to consider them a good omen and to be pleased at seeing them. With this clarification I reproduce below the second piece of writing that came together with Hazrat's (May his shade be extended) letter:

24 Rajab-ul Murajjab 1432H

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Around five years ago a Hifz teacher (who is a pious person and regular in his daily *ma'moolat*¹) saw the Noble Messenger (Peace be upon him) in a dream. I quote the dream in his own words (with minor edits):

“This lowly one, Shabbir Ahmad Naroli, saw a dream during the days of Hajj (i.e. in the month of *Dhul Hijjah*). I would like to seek its interpretation. The dream transpired as such: at the time of *Tahajjud*, this lowly one felt that *Khanqah*-related activities are proceeding in Jamiya Dabhel, and that this lowly one, after teaching in my village, also attends the *Khanqah* once in a while. When I arrived one day, I learned that the Noble Messenger (Peace be upon him) is sitting under the fan near the first window, at the first door when one enters from the direction of *Hayya ‘alal Falah*. At that time, some people were blessed with meeting him. This lowly one also met, and for some time people continued coming and visiting him. This lowly one felt a desire to meet a second time, so I went forward again. Seeing me, the Noble Messenger (Peace be upon him) quickly sat up and bestowed the honour of meeting him, and said: “Are you alright?” This lowly one replied with *Alhamdulillah*. Soon after, tea was brought for the Noble Messenger (Peace be upon him) which he drank. I desired to present something from my house, so I signaled a student to quickly go to my house and bring some food. He soon returned with chicken and *roti*. I respectfully presented it and he ate it. I was overjoyed at his eating his full, and remembered the event during the *Hijrah* when the Noble Messenger (Peace be upon him) drank milk at the house of Umm Ma’bad (May Allah be pleased with her). When he drank the milk, Hazrat Abu Bakr (May Allah be pleased with him) remarked: “He drank, until he became full and I became overjoyed.” I was having the same feeling. Thereafter the Noble Messenger (Peace be upon him) turned his gaze towards his left, towards the first window. A book named *Anwar-e-Nubuwwat* (authored by Mufti Shabbir Sahab) was placed on it. “Bring that book”, he instructed me. I presented it, and began opening it and explaining: “O Messenger of Allah! All his books are very well-referenced. For each Hadith, Mufti Sahab cites the name of the source, the volume number, the page number and also the line number”. At this the Noble Messenger (Peace be upon him) remarked: “Yes! Mufti Shabbir in India and Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani in Pakistan are doing very good work”. After a while the Noble Messenger (Peace be upon him) proceeded towards the *Hayya ‘Alas Salah* side of the Masjid. A few people were eating something. It was rice mixed with milk. The Noble Messenger (Peace be upon him) put his blessed staff aside and joined them. Meanwhile, Hazrat Maulana Abdullah Kapodarvi Sahab came in, met the Noble Messenger (Peace be upon him) and remarked: “O Messenger of Allah! You have put aside your staff contrary to your habit. The Noble Messenger (Peace be upon him) replied: “Yes *Bhai*! One should bear difficulties for someone’s sake.” Several scholars were in attendance at this time. Hazrat Mufti Ahmad Sahab (May his shade be extended) was also present. Conversations were continuing when the *adhan* of Fajr came and this lowly one awoke.”

¹ Daily routine of prayers, recitations, etc.

After receiving this letter, I sent the following reply to Hazrat Mufti Sahab (May his shade be extended):

Honourable Hazrat Maulana Mufti Ahmad Khanpuri Sahab (May his lofty shade be extended),

Assalamualaikum Wa-Rahmatullahi Wa Barakaatuhu,

I received the letter via email from your respected self at a time when I was on the verge of setting off for my travel to Britain. Until now I received recommendations to write my autobiography from several dear friends, but each time I would stiffly reject the proposal, because in reality this lowly one doesn't consider himself to be someone worth writing an autobiography about. Furthermore, the need to give time to other important works never ceases. However, the kind and sincere manner in which your respected self wrote the letter has made me, for the first time, to seriously ponder over this proposal. The reality remains that what benefit can the autobiography of a mosquito or fly give to anyone? But I have begun to seriously think over some of the points you directed my attention towards in your letter. One thought is still a big obstacle, i.e. I have a few other literary works in mind for whatever remains of my life. The question is, is it better to use my time on those works or this work? If I get the opportunity, *InshAllah* I will seek guidance from your respected self in person regarding this.

I felt surreal beyond words after reading the dream your respected self narrated. May Allah the Glorious and Most High make this lowly one worthy of it. *Ameen*. I am interested in knowing Mufti Shabbir Ahmad Sahab (May his shade be extended) and his works. This lowly one is not introduced to him. Please write a few lines about him, if possible.

Wassalam,

Muhammad Taqi Usmani

6/8/1432H

After this, I received the following letter from Hazrat Mufti Sahab (May his shade be extended):

With His name, the Most High,

In the service of Hazrat Maulana Muhammad Taqi Usmani Sahab (May his blessings continue forever),

I am well and hope from Allah that you are also well.

In the month of *Sha'ban Mua'zzam* this lowly one, through a letter, had requested Hazrat to write his autobiography. Hazrat honoured this request by accepting it, in person and also via writing. May Allah give you the best rewards for this.

This lowly one was blessed with the opportunity to visit *Makkah Mua'zzamah* in the Blessed Month. On that occasion, Hazrat had stated: "I have started work on the autobiography".

On returning to my home town (India), Hazrat's honourable letter addressed to this lowly one was received in which Hazrat had mentioned pondering over it seriously.

This lowly one is overjoyed at Hazrat's honouring his request with acceptance, and beginning work on it. At the same time, this lowly one has also felt Hazrat's benevolence.

Whoever came to know of this here is overjoyed, and is also making *dua* that may Allah Ta'ala grant a speedy progress to completion in this regard. (Ameen)

Hazrat has stated the following in his honourable letter:

"One thought is still a big obstacle, i.e. I have a few other literary works in mind for whatever remains of my life. The question is, is it better to use my time on those works or this work?"

Only Hazrat knows the real answer to this. This lowly one's deficient viewpoint is:

- 1) Hazrat could get literary works done by others under Hazrat's supervision, and Hazrat can personally work on the autobiography. This is because the former can be done by other scholars and any shortcomings can also be addressed by them, while this is not possible for the latter. It is impossible for someone else to portray the true circumstances that took place. If someone decides to attempt this, he will either exaggerate or understate the reality, similar to what some biographers in the past have fallen into.
- 2) From Hazrat's own talks, thousands have learned, practiced and benefitted from the solution to this dilemma. I reproduce Hazrat's own words from "Discourses":

The best trick to get things done

Our respected father Hazrat Mufti Muhammad Shafi Sahab (May his secret be sanctified) used to say that a work which is deferred until one gets the opportune moment is a work deferred forever, never to be done. This is because you put it off. The way to get things done is to insert it between two other works, i.e. when you want to add a third task to your routine then forcibly add it in between two such things which are already a part of your daily routine. This way that third work will also get done. But if you begin thinking that I will do that third task after finishing those two tasks first, then you will never get it done. Making plans to do something after finishing a work is one of the devices of procrastination. (*Islahi Khutbat*: 1/53).

I found courage and dared to present the above two solutions due to Hazrat's words: "If I get the opportunity, InshAllah I will seek guidance from your respected self in person regarding this." Otherwise a junior giving advice to his senior is like showing a lamp to the sun.

Hazrat stated in the letter, out of humbleness:

“The reality remains that what benefit can the autobiography of a mosquito or fly give to anyone?”

In this lowly one’s opinion, the above sentence is full of meaning. It is enough as a reply to this that if a fly contained no benefit, then a Surah “An-Nahl” (honeybee) would not have been named after it in the Noble Quran.

Another point comes to mind, that both the mosquito and the fly are beings that fly. Hazrat’s autobiography is in reality a biography of the world. Hardly anyone from the people of knowledge would have flown as much as Hazrat. Hazrat’s books “Jahan-e-Deedah” and “Dunya Meray Aagay” are evident proofs for this. When Hazrat’s travelogues are such that:

لذیذ بود حکایت، دراز تر گفتم

It is not inappropriate to lengthen a captivating story

Then what would be the state of the autobiography? I’m unable to put it in words.

Anyway, I repeat my request that please do continue the autobiography, which you have started, to its completion.

May Allah Ta’ala keep your benevolent shadow over us until very long with ‘aafiyah (peace and health) and safety, and may He put *barakah* (blessing) in Hazrat’s time.

Dictated by lowly Ahmad (May he be pardoned) Khanpuri,

Servant of Darul Iftaa and Teaching Faculty,

Jamiyah Islamiya Ta’leemud Deen Dabhel

Dated: 10 Dhi Qa’dah 1432H

The views Hazrat Mufti Sahab (May his shade be extended) has expressed for this lowly one in this letter are no doubt stemming from his good opinion and love. Otherwise, من آنم کہ من دانم (I know my reality). But together with this letter, another thought persuaded me to act on this request. Some people who love me have written my biography, induced by their love, in Urdu and Arabic. Going through them made it clear to me that their love for me lead them to exaggerate in many matters. Additionally, while discussing some topics, the full background and details could not reach them, and perhaps nobody can elucidate their true reality besides myself. Thus, to set the record straight, it is appropriate that I should clarify their reality myself.

On the other hand, the matter which was a big impediment for me, i.e. I had numerous literary works in mind, and leaving them to stir up a personal tale weighed heavily on me. To be able to do both, I had promised Hazrat Mufti Ahmad Khanpuri Sahab (May his shade be extended) that I will fulfill his request by penning the memories of my past life during my travels.

I thus wrote the letter below in reply:

With the name of Allah, the All-Merciful, the Very-Merciful

Honourable Hazrat Maulana Mufti Ahmad Khanpuri Sahab (May his noble shade be extended)

Assalamualaikum Wa-Rahmatullahi Wa Barakaatuhu

I received Hazrat's letter via email, and in compliance with Hazrat's directive I have decided to begin this work, with the name of Allah Ta'ala, during my travels. Hazrat is departing for Hajj soon. This lowly one requests for *duas*. Even though this lowly one knows that Hazrat makes *dua* for this useless one, my heart still desires to ask Hazrat for *duas*. And please also make dua that if Allah Ta'ala's pleasure lies in this work, then He grants the ability to complete it in such a manner that other works are not disturbed. Further, I also request to present Salam from this useless one on the sacred *Rowdah*. May Allah Ta'ala grant you the blessings of *Hajj Mabroor*, and return you with 'aafiyah (peace and health). And may your benevolent shade remain on us with the same blessings until a long time. Ameen! *Wassalam*.

Lowly Muhammad Taqi Usmani,

28 Dhul Qa'dah 1432H

Therefore, acting on this plan of action, I began this work during flights and accommodations during travels. A decent amount had been completed when I met Hazrat Mufti Sahab (May his shade be extended) after some time. When I informed Hazrat Mufti Sahab (May his blessings continue) about this, he advised to start publishing it as monthly episodes in the monthly "*Al-Balagh*". With the name of Allah Ta'ala, I am thus beginning this series from next month. May Allah Ta'ala make it beneficial for the readers. Ameen.